

This information is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of existing navigation rules and regulations.

Locally used Radio Channels

Note: Unless otherwise specified all channels are VHF-FM radio channels.

Ch 5A (156.250 MHz): VTS Houston / Galveston check-in channel, "Houston Traffic".

Ch 11 (156.550 MHz): VTS Houston / Galveston upper channel operating frequency, from Baytown, Lt 113, to Buffalo Bayou.

CH 12 (156.600 MHz): VTS Houston / Galveston lower channel operating frequency, from the Galveston Sea Buoy to Baytown, Lt 113.

CH 13 (156.650 MHz): Bridge to Bridge radio channel. Vessel passing arrangements are made on this channel. If operating in or near the ship channel it is required for commercial vessels to monitor this channel and private watercraft should also do so.

CH 14 (156.700 MHz): Port Operations

CH 16 (156.800 MHz): International hailing and distress. Vessels maintaining a listening watch on a VTS operating frequency are not required to monitor CH 16 while in the VTSA. **USCG Group Galveston** maintains radio watch on this channel.

CH 81 (157.075 MHz): Standby and working channel for **USCG Marine Safety Office (MSO) Houston**.

Local Terminology

Note: In the Houston / Galveston area commercial vessel operators vary rarely if ever use the "Port to Port", "Starboard to Starboard" terms associated with vessel passing arrangements. Instead they refer to "Whistles" over the radio.

"See you on the one", "One whistle": Port to Port **passing** arrangement.

"See you on the two", "Two whistles": Starboard to Starboard **passing** arrangement.

"Come around you on the one": A vessel arranging with another vessel to **overtake** them on their starboard side.

"Come around you on the two": A vessel arranging with another vessel to **overtake** them on their port side.

Inbound: Refers to a vessel whose direction of travel is from the lower channel, Galveston area to the upper channel, Houston area.

Outbound: Refers to a vessel whose direction of travel is from the upper channel, Houston area to the lower channel, Galveston area.

Topping Around: Turning a vessel around 180 degrees in the channel, either for docking or to change direction in the channel.

On the Hip: Refers to a tow vessel with a barge made up along side the vessel.

On the Wire: Refers to a vessel towing a vessel or barge on a tow line.

Pushing Ahead: Refers to a tow vessel pushing barges ahead of the tow vessel.

Doubled Up: Refers to barges made up side by side, increasing the width of the vessel.

"Doubling Up My Tow": Refers to a tow that will be breaking up the barges from an end-to-end configuration and putting them side by side. This operation may briefly block the channel.

"Stringing Out My Tow": Refers to a tow that will be breaking up the barges from a side by side configuration and putting them end to end. This operation may briefly block the channel.

"One Load", "One Empty": Refers to the barges a tow may be pushing. Empty barges affect how well a tow vessel can maneuver differently than loaded barges, particularly in bad weather or high winds.

Local Geographic References

"Deep Water Anchorage": Anchorage Area "A", located between the Galveston Jetties, north of the channel and east of Anchorage "B". Vessel drafts greater than 22 feet.

"Shallow Water Anchorage": Anchorage Area "B", located between the Galveston Jetties, north of the channel and west of Anchorage "A". Vessel drafts less than 22 feet.

ICW Intersection: Area where the Houston Ship Channel intersects the Intercoastal Waterway (ICW) between the Bolivar Peninsula and Pelican Cut. This area can be very busy with inbound/outbound ship/tow traffic and tow traffic crossing the ICW.

"Rounding The Horn": The turn into Texas City Harbor from the Texas City Channel north of Snake Island in the vicinity of Texas City LT's 19 & 21.

Redfish: Area around Redfish Island in Galveston Bay. Along the channel this is in the vicinity of LT's 51/52 and LT's 53/54.

5 Mile: Refers to the area around 5 Mile Cut. Along the channel this is in the vicinity of LT 76.

"The Point": Refers to Morgan's Point.

"Red Light Bend": The section of channel around the Fred Hartman Bridge.

USI Canal: San Jacinto Bay Channel.

"The Crossovers": The stretch of Houston Ship Channel from LT 118 to LT 126.

Lynchburg: Refers to the Lynchburg Ferry Crossing at the mouth of the San Jacinto River.

"Two Dollar Bridge", "Jessie Jones Bridge": The Sam Houston Bridge, Beltway 8, that crosses the Houston Ship Channel above LT 145.

"The Junk Yard": Area along the Houston Ship Channel in the vicinity of LT146.

"610 Bridge": The Sidney Sherman Bridge, Interstate 610, that crosses the Houston Ship Channel in the Manchester / Galena Park area.

City Docks: The docks along the channel between the 610 Bridge and Buffalo Bayou.